11th November 2022

Chaos

Good morning,

In this article I wish to approach the notion of **chaos** from the mythological, biblical, scientific, and psychological point of view and of course from the alchemical point of view.

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Church of the Madeleine in Troyes in the Aube
Chapel of the Virgin - Polychrome stained glass - Circa 1500

Let's look at the image above:
On the left, a representation of **God** in the face of chaos. God is here personified in a man dressed in a purple robe and wearing a triple crown or trireign which symbolizes three kingdoms. In the 16th century, the date of creation of these magnificent polychrome stained glass windows, these three kingdoms are the **spiritual** , the **temporal** and the **physical** , but also the scientific trilogy of the time: **Astrology** , **Magic** and **Alchemy** .

[http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-3zVWdDl-XC4/VHzKhhWfzCI/AAAAAAAAAlI/SHt4RZx_cEo/s1600/Chaos%2B-%2BCosmos.jpg]

As an introduction to this article, I would like to mention a few scientists thanks to whom the modern science of space and the universe was born:

- The Polish **Nicolas Copernic** discovers heliocentrism, that is to say that it is the sun and not the earth the center of our universe (*"De revolutionibus orbium coelestium"* or "Celestial revolutions" - 1543)
- The Italian **Giordano Bruno** elaborates for the first time the modern notion of space (*"De l'infinito, universo et mondi"* or "Of the infinite, the Universe and the worlds" - 1584) The Italian **Galileo** establishes the law of falling bodies and confirms the theses of Copernicus (*"Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo"* or "Dialogue between the two great systems of the world" - 1632)
- Englishman **Isaac Newton** describes the principles of universal attraction (*"Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica" or* "The mathematical principles of natural philosophy" - 1687).
- The Belgian **Georges Lemaître** puts forward the hypothesis of an expanding universe then develops the so-called theory of the primitive atom (1931) This atom whose phenomenal explosion would have given birth to the universe will be at the origin of the theory of the Big Bang.

[http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-z5QiVaijQLo/VZAZeWm7F3I/AAAAAAAAI4o/cmPqOyrMmXA/s1600/Lorenzo%2BLotto%2B-%2BChaos.jpg]
" Magnum Chaos" by Lorenzo Lotto - 1480/1556

The word **"chaos"** is of Greek origin and means for the ancient Greeks a complete void where nothing exists. It is a neuter word which is therefore neither masculine nor feminine. **Chaos** for the Greeks is a dark fog, a space of fall, of vertigo in which everything is caught up. This notion corresponds substantially to what modern astronomy calls "black hole".
Always for the Greeks it is from Chaos that appeared the earth which they call **Gaïa** . It is opposed to Chaos in the sense that it offers a delimited, clear, stable space where beings do not fall but on the contrary can stand and walk.
Another primordial entity is born from the earth and is called **Eros** . Attention, it is not about Eros (Roman Cupid) engendered by Aphrodite and who is often represented by a winged androgyne with a bow and arrows. Greek primordial Eros has nothing to do with sexed love, it simply expresses a formidable thrust in the universe.
In the myth of creation according to the Greeks there are therefore three primordial entities: **Chaos** ,**Eros** .

Then Gaïa gives birth to Ouranos and Pontos. **Ouranos** designates the starry sky and **Pontos** the sea waves and the oceans. Originally Ouranos covers Gaia completely, there is no terrestrial atmosphere.
Also from Chaos is produced Erebos and Nux. **Erebos** designates absolute black in its pure state and **Nux** the

night. Nux gives birth to Ether and Hêmerê. **Ether** designates the ethereal light and **Hemere** the light of day.

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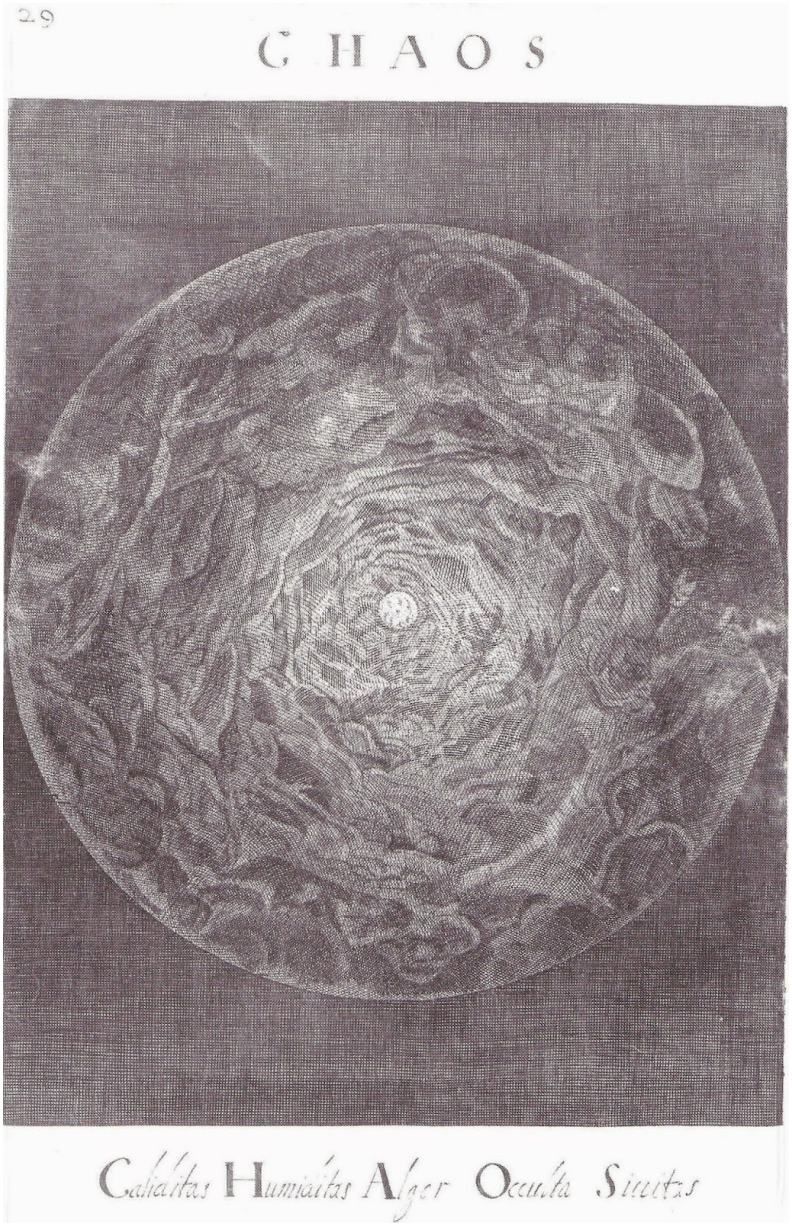
"Gaïa surrounded by her entire court" - Second half of the 3rd century BC - Greco-Roman mosaic - Shahba - Syria



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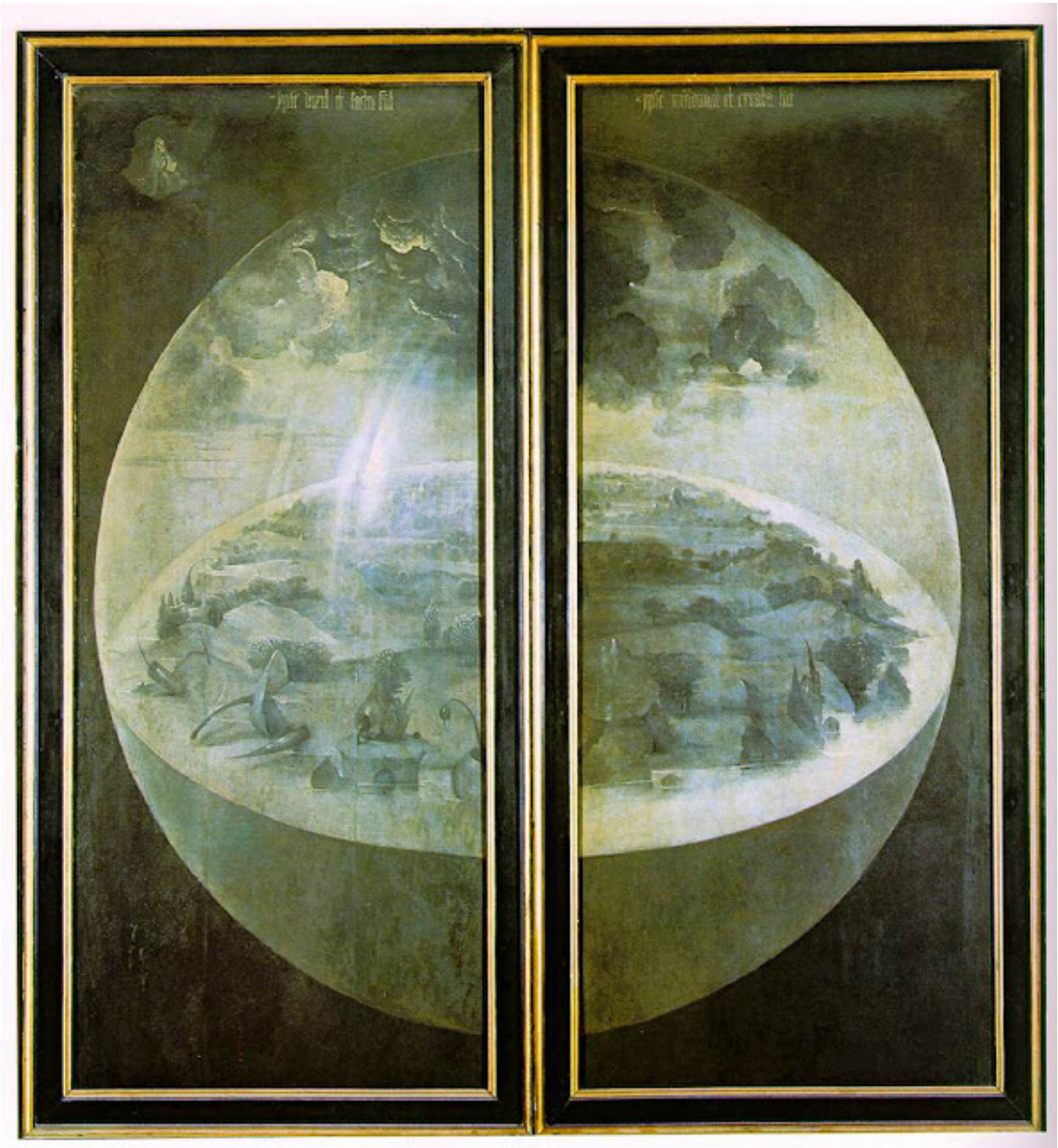
"Chaos" from "The Staircase of the Sages"
by Barent Coenders Van Helpen - 1689

Let's look at the image above:
Below this illustration are the words: *"Heat, Humidity, Cold, Drought."*
According to the Orphic tradition **Chronos** , Time is one of the first principles resulting from Chaos and Ether. Cosmic matter was slowly organized by Ether and took the form of a gigantic egg *(See Bosh's illustration below)* . Here we see a depiction of the earth opening up at its center and the analogous evolution of Chaos from the Prima Materia. Deep in the abyss we can see the Philosopher's Stone!

This is why the Polish alchemist and physician **Michael Sendivigius** (1566-1636) writes:
"Let your first care be to dissolve this prime matter or prime entity which the sages have called the greatest natural good. It must be purified of its aquatic and earthly natures (for it comes first in the form of a earthly body, heavy, thick, slippery and opaque) and all that is shadowy, thick, nebulous, opaque must be removed so that, in a final sublimation, the heart and the depths of the soul in it separate and be reduced into a precious essence."

(Michel sendivigius - "Novum lumen chemicum" - Theatrum chemicum - page 547)

This Chaos is comparable to what Kabbalah calls ***"En Soph"*** , that is to say a "supreme being unlimited, without end, without beginning". Everything in this world comes from this Chaos. It is according to the kabbalistic tradition of this original intelligence that the ten Sephirot of the tree of life are born, which symbolize the divine attributes.



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Hieronymus Bosch - The Creation of the World - The Garden of Earthly Delights - Circa 1510

Let's look at the image above:
We see here the representation of a large crystalline sphere which contains the world in gestation. It is a gigantic egg which is the matrix of the different forms of life: *vegetable, mineral and animal.* It is in a certain way the representation of the original chaos, the beginning of the work of God but also for the follower of the great Art a means of representing the essential link for the success of the Opus to the **Earth nourisher** .

The egg is a symbol of the macrocosm in the microcosm. He is also the *Prima Materia* in which the soul of the world is captive. For more details on the symbolism of the egg, read the article The **Philosopher's [http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2012/08/loeuf-des-philosophes.html] Egg [http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2012/08/loeuf-des-philosophes.html]**

[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-3doG9t4aBFI/VZAc7cxPEXI/AAAAAAAAI4w/9bgloV_19yE/s1600/Chaos%2Bcosmique.jpeg]
Cosmic Chaos from "Paintings from the Temple of the Muses"
by Michel Marolles - Paris - 1655

Let's look at the image above:
This is a representation of Chaos as described by Ovid in the "Metamorphoses".
Cosmic Chaos is released by initial alchemical procedures.

From the psychological point of view Chaos represents the unconscious, matrix of symbols. But the most unconscious unconscious, if I dare say, that is to say devoid of any consciousness.

"The golden germ (...) must be placed in the vas hermeticum *and subjected there to heat until the humidity which still adheres to it has dissipated,* the radical humidum *, the* materia prima *, that is to say the original chaos and the sea (the unconscious). One can only see there a process of passage to consciousness."*
("Mysterium conjunctionis - volume I" by Carl Gustav Jung - page 35)

"The "formless living mass" directly recalls the representations of alchemical "chaos", the massa *or* materia informis *or* confusa *which contains the seeds of divine life since creation. According to a midrashic conception, Adam was created in a very similar way: during the first hour, God gathered the dust; during the second hour, he transformed it into a shapeless mass; during the third, he fashioned the limbs."*
("Psychology and Alchemy" by Carl Gustav Jung - page 192)

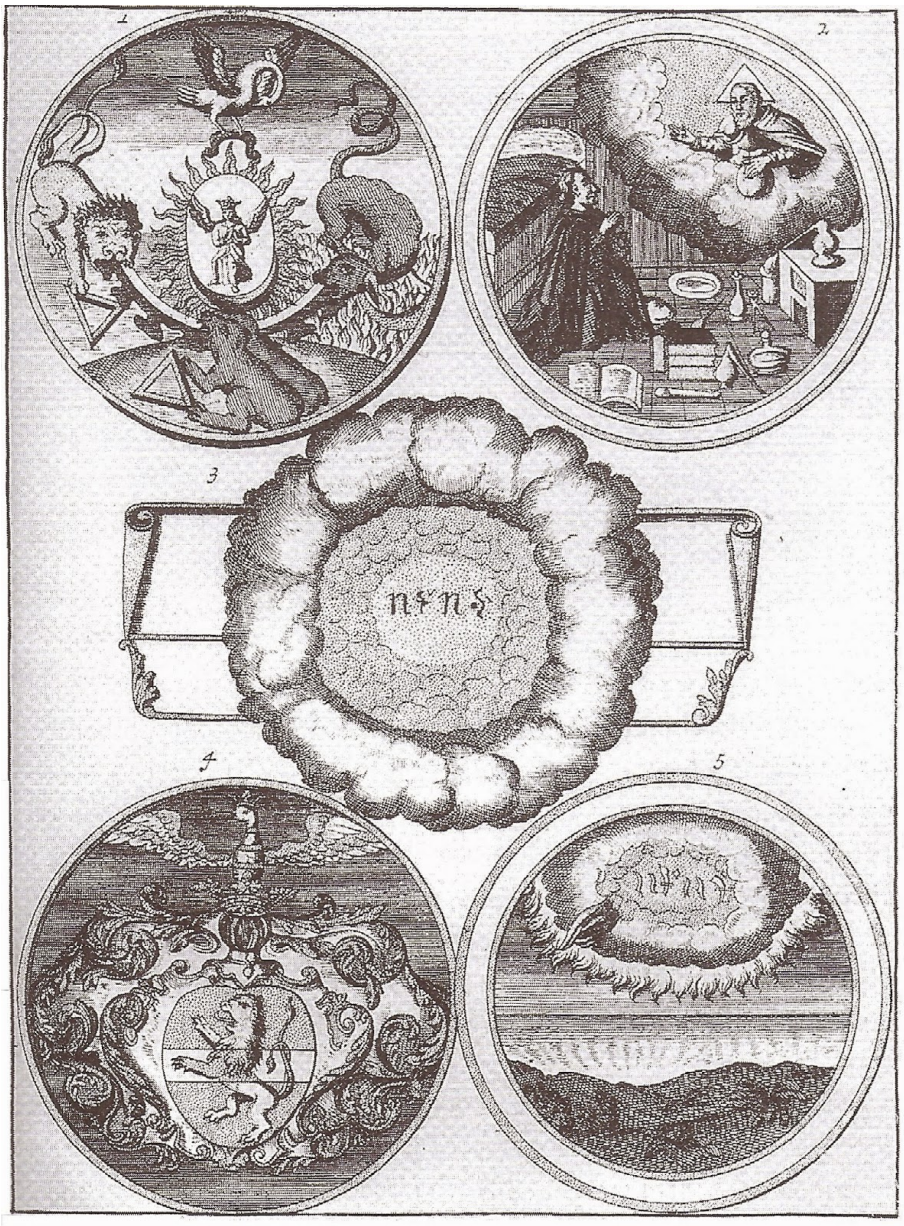
"To reach the kingdom of God the king must transform himself into materia prima *in the maternal body and thus return to this state initial darkness that alchemists call chaos. In this state of* confused massa *the elements are in struggle with each other and repel each other, so that any link between them is dissolved. Dissolution is the prerequisite of redemption. It is the figurative death that the mystic must undergo in order to be able to live his transformation."*
("Mysterium conjunctionis - volume II" by Carl Gustav Jung - page 44)

"The difficult to reach treasure which was supposed to be present in the dark prima materia *was symbolized in various ways by the alchemists. Christophorus of Paris, for example, says that chaos (=* the prima materia *) is the work of very wise nature.* Our understanding (intellectus) *must transform this natural work of art, chaos, and elevate it to the celestial nature of the quintessence and life-giving essence* (vegetabilis) *of heaven, with the aid of the celestial and radiant* spirit (spiritus) " *The so-called "precious" substance potentially exists in this chaos in the form of a* confused mass *of the united elements, and that is why human reason must apply itself to it assiduously* (incumbere debet) *so that our sky may become reality* (ad actum) *."* ("Psychology and Alchemy" by Carl Gustav Jung - page 435)

For the alchemists, Chaos represents the raw material of the work, a coarse, imperfect material that must be purified and "elevated". Alchemical chaos is a primordial disorder that must be clarified with the operations of dissolution, of putrefaction. The alchemists compare their chaos to a manure, an impure woman, a livid old man, to the color black or to hell. They often associate it with the reign of Saturn.
(For more details on putrefaction read the article: **Putrefaction [http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2012/05/la-putrefaction.html]** ; for more detail on Saturn read the articles: **Saturn, the myth [http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2011/11/saturne-1.html]** , and **Saturn, the lead [http://aqua-permanens.blogspot.fr/2011/11/saturne-2.html]**)

"Chaos is materia confusa *(confused matter). est nécessaire à l'art. Quatre éléments sont mélangés dans un état de confusion dans la* materia prima*, parce que la terre et l'eau, qui sont plus lourds que les autres éléments, s'élevaient jusqu'à la lune, alors que le feu et l'air, qui sont plus légers que les autres, descendaient jusqu'au centre de la terre, c'est pourquoi une telle* materia *est appelée, avec raison, confuse. Il ne reste qu'une partie de cette matière confuse dans le monde, et celle-ci est connue de tous et se vend publiquement."*
("Theatrum Chemicum - Dialogus inter naturam et filium philosophia" - Aegidius de Vadis - page 366)

"The creation of the stone takes place in the image of the creation of the world, because it is necessary that it has its chaos and its original matter, within which the confused elements will float until they are separated by the fiery spirit... The waters gather and the dry land appears."
("Arcanum hermeticae philosophia" Espagnet)



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"Elementa chemicae" - "The Chemical Elements"
JC Barchusen - 1718 - Plate 1

Let's look at the image above:
The central medallion represents chaos.
In the medallion at the top left we see a Lion and a Wolf devouring with a dragon in the foreground the extremities of the "work". This is the principle of opposites. The Lion represents the body, the Wolf the antimony. They symbolically represent the emblems which are necessary for the realization of the opus.
It is about the purification and transformation of the "vulgar" and the "vile". Ordinary gold, that is to say the known metal, must be purified several times to become the gold of the philosophers or the gold of the wise.
At the top of the medallion a phoenix which represents death and rebirth.
The four elements of earth, water, air and fire are represented.
In the foreground a dragon which represents the raw philosophical material subjected to the process. Notice the two squares that form triangles that touch the lion and the dragon. These two brackets illustrate two matching units.

In the center, the Mercury of the philosophers. Note that he is sovereign with his crown but volatile with his wings.

The second medallion at the top right represents a follower who prays on his knees and implores divine help for the realization of his work.

In the medallion at the bottom left are represented the arms of the stone of the philosophers. It is in a way the heraldic shield of the alchemists. The eagle and the lion illustrate the Spirit and the body.

In the fifth medallion of this first board are represented the four elements: fire, air, water and earth.

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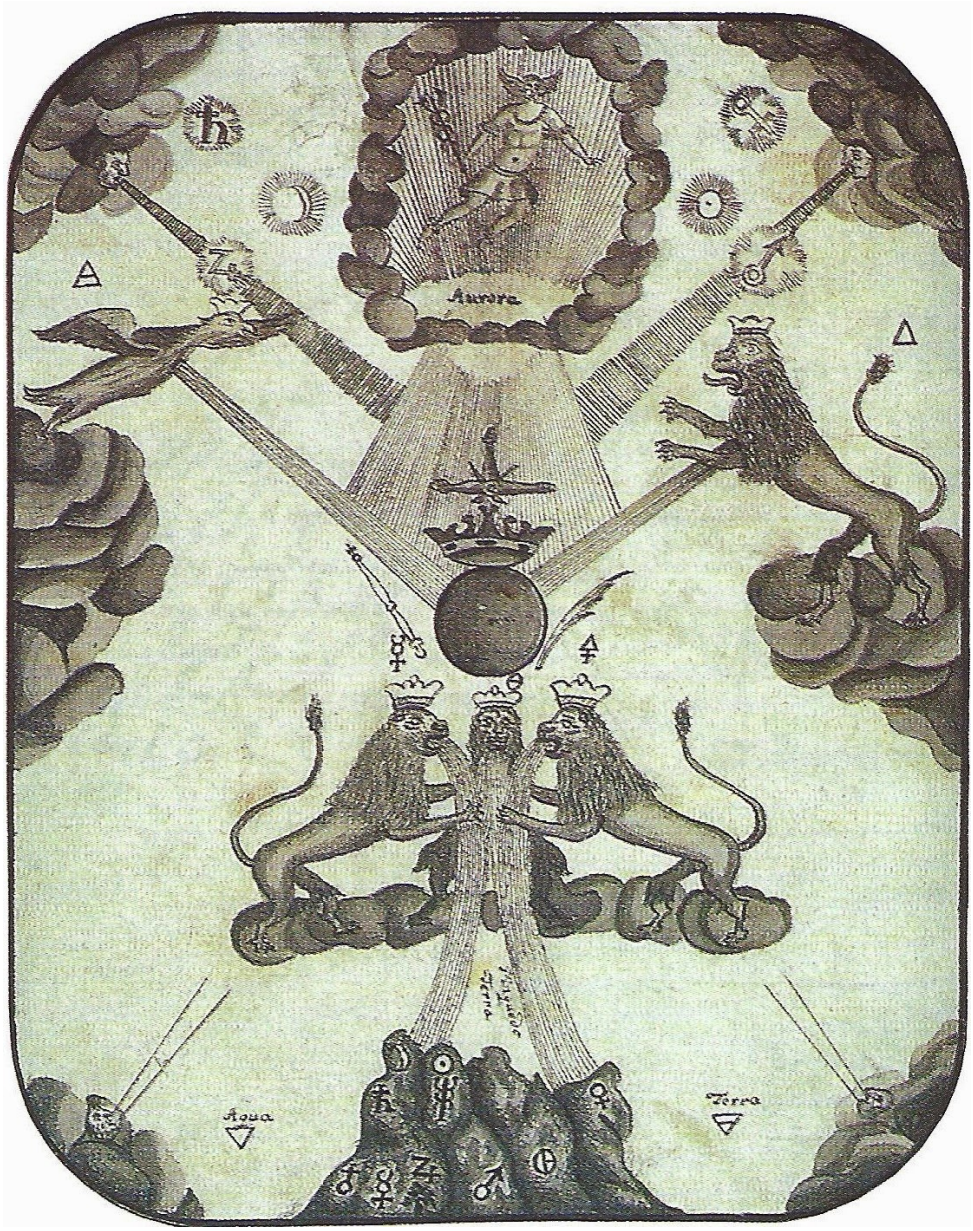
The raw material - Azoth - Brother Basile Valentin



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Chaos - German manuscript - 18th century

[http://3.bp.blogspot.com/-9uZxQr8Rrgo/VHzY3JChHNI/AAAAAAAAlms/hi1_760nTuU/s1600/De%2BHooghe%2B-%2BHieroglyphica%2Bou%2Bsymboles%2Bdes%2Banciens%2B-%2BAmsterdam%2B-%2B1744.jpeg]

De Hooghe - Hieroglyphica or symbols of the ancients - Amsterdam - 1744

Let's look at the image above:

Several scenes and characters here represent chaos such as paganism, that is to say before the advent of Christianity, represented it.

At the bottom slightly right of the illustration lies in the center the land **Chronos** encircled by the Ouroboros which devours its own tail.

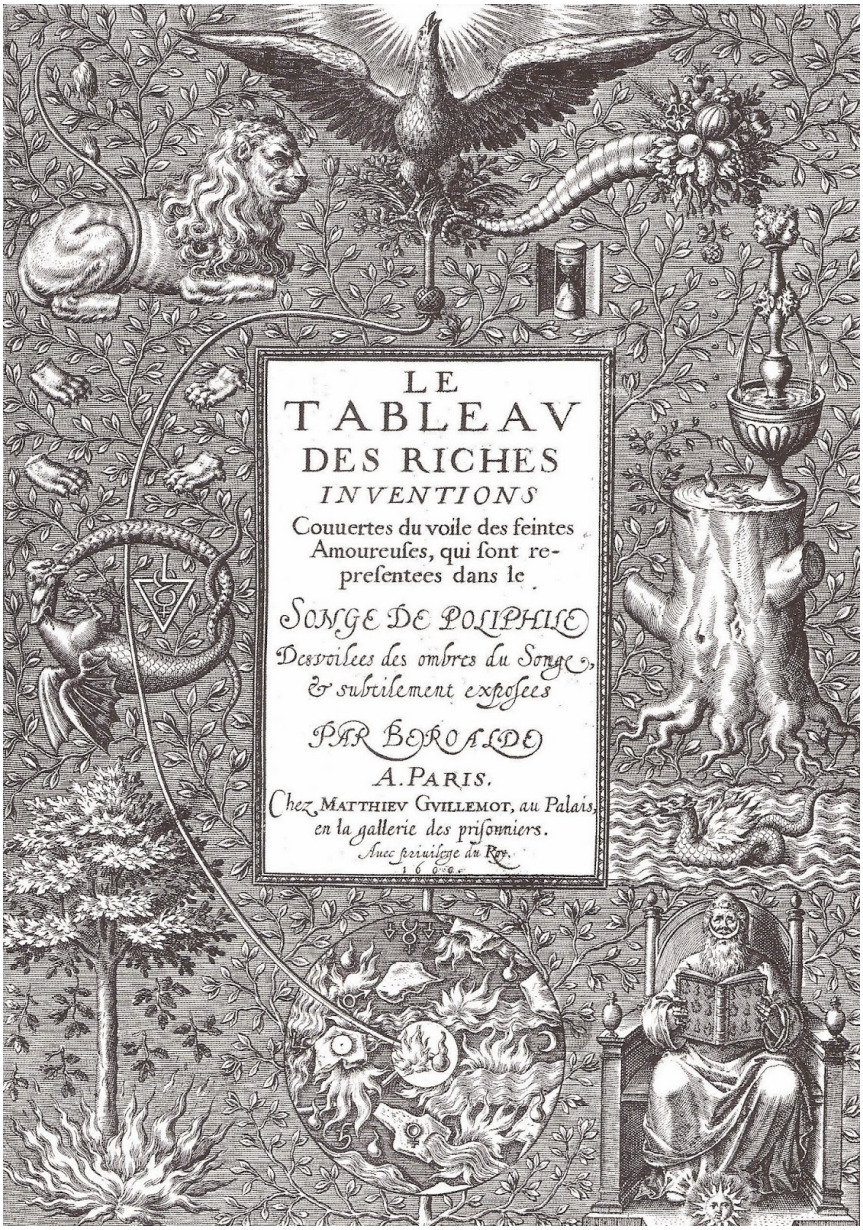
Above, on the right, **Eneph** the Egyptian (B) who dyes an egg in his mouth which represents chaos, ie the Prima Materia in which the soul of the world is captive.

For more details, read: **The Egg of the Philosophers [https://aqua-permanens.blogspot.com/2012/08/loeuf-des-philosophes.html]**

Next to Eneph, **Saturn (C)** with his scythe.

For more detail on Saturn read: **Saturn, the Myth [https://aqua-permanens.blogspot.com/2011/11/saturne-1.html]** , and **Saturn, Lead [https://aqua-permanens.blogspot.com/2011/11/saturne-2.html]** **[https://aqua-permanens.blogspot.com/2011/11/saturne-2.html]**

Bottom left, **Pan** with his famous flute, divinity of nature who represents the spagyric fire that disintegrates the chaotic mass.
In the cave, notice the four children who represent the four elements (earth, air, water and fire) and potentially the soul of the protagonist.
Top right, **Atlas** on top of a mountain so from a symbolic point of view inside, carries the world on his shoulders.
At the top a little to the left, the spirit of God (L) who sits above the darkness.
At the top left "M", ie the Hebrew word *berechith* means "in the beginning".



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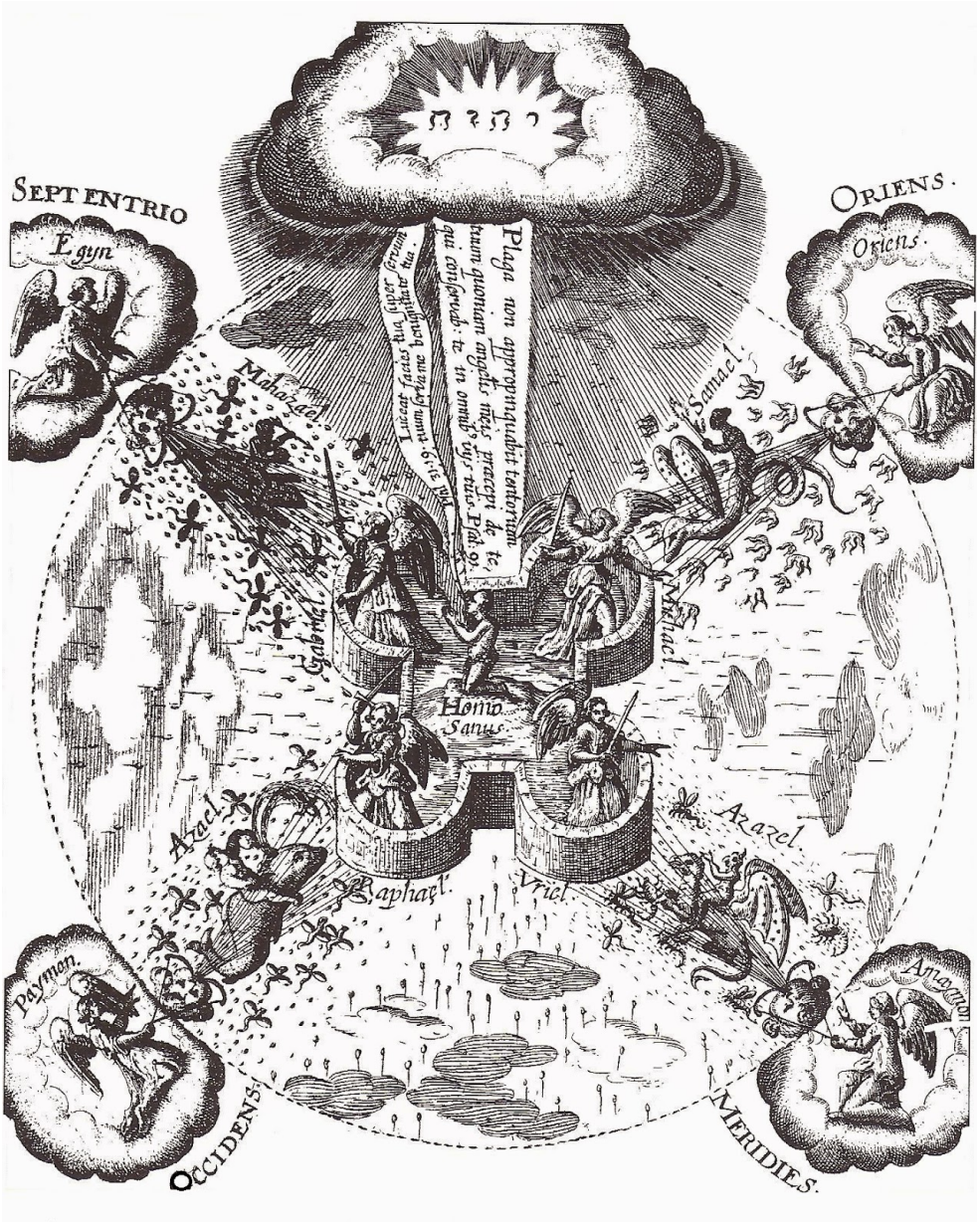
"The Table of Rich Inventions" - Dream of Poliphile
Francois Béroalde de Verville - 1600



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Eruption of forces released from the unconscious

Let's look at the image above:

This illustration depicts the forces released by the onslaught of the shadowy raw material, that is to say unconscious.

At the four corners of the image, four angels on the order of God release the demons Azael, Azazel, Samuel and Mahazael as well as their dangerous animals and insects of all kinds.

Azael is a demon mentioned in the Old Testament book of Enoch.

In the middle, the small fortress represents the conscious pole. The four Archangels Michael, Raphael, Gabriel and Ouriel defend the four corners of the small castle. In the center of the building, the kneeling alchemist addresses a prayer to heaven.

Psalm XXXI:

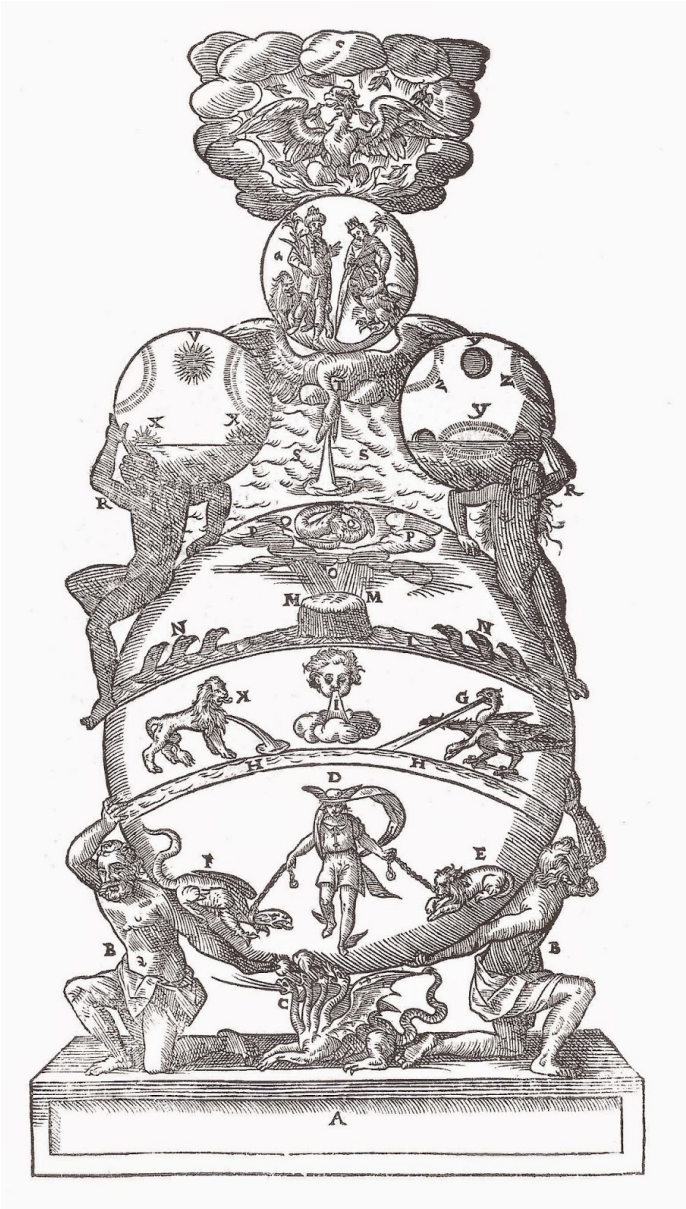
Blessed is the man whose fault is taken away, and whose sin is forgiven!

Blessed is the man whose offense the Lord does not retain, whose mind is without guile!

I was silent and my strength was exhausted in moaning all day: your hand, day and night, weighed on me; my vigor withered like grass in summer.
I let you know my fault, I did not hide my faults. I said, "I'll give thanks to the Lord by confessing my sins. And you, you removed the offense from my fault.
Thus each of your people will pray to you at decisive times; not even the overflowing waters can reach it. You are a refuge for me, my shelter in distress; songs of deliverance you have surrounded me.
"I will instruct you, show you the way to follow, advise you, watch over you.
*Don't imitate the mules and the horses that don't understand, that you have to put down with the bridle and the bit, * and nothing will happen to you. »*
For the wicked, sorrows without number; but the love of the Lord will surround those who rely on him.
May the Lord be your joy! Exult, righteous men! Upright men, sing your joy!

Chaos is fertile with new creation.

demoniacs of the repressed unconscious



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%2BAndreas%2BLibavius%2B-%2B1606.jpeg]

"The philosophical work" - excerpt from "Alchymia"
Andreas Libavius - 1606

Let's look at the image above:
This illustration summarizes the entire great alchemical Work according to *Andreas Libavius,* physician and alchemist born in Halle in Saxony.
A number of letters are mentioned. The illustration is read from bottom to top.

Let's see the detail:
A - The pedestal or base: The Earth on which the Work is founded.
B - Two giants or Atlas on their knees on the base which support the sphere, that is to say the Work with their hands.
C - The first Dragon: Subject of the art whose four heads blow the four fires. The first mouth emits a kind of air, the second subtle smoke, the third mouth emits smoke and fire and the fourth pure fire. Note that it is from the breath of the Dragon that the Sphere or Work takes shape.
D - The Mercurius: The mediator or Salt of harmony. Note that he is holding a silver chain to which two animals are attached: The Green Lion and the second Dragon. These two animals represent two aspects of the same thing: the mercurial liquid which is the *prima materia* of the Stone.
E - The Green Lion: The solvent that allows integration; assimilation.
F - The second Dragon: The volatile dragon, that is to say the subject to be dissolved.
G - The three-headed Silver Eagle which symbolizes the triple dissolution. Two of its heads wither and bend while the third spits white water or glue that is still called "mercurial liquid" into the sea.
H - The Sea of Philosophers.
I - The celestial influx or Wind that exhales the breath of the spirit or " *spiritus* " into the sea just below.
K - The Blood of the Red Lion or Fixation. Notice that red blood is flowing from her chest into the sea below, because you have to color her as if she were a mixture of Silver and Gold or white and red. This image is applied to body, soul and spirit by those who seek three principles in the beginning.
L - The River of black water which represents *Putrefactio* or **Putrefaction** **[https://aqua-permanens.blogspot.com/2012/05/la-putrefaction.html]**
M - The Mountain: first Dissolution and Coagulation and second Dissolution resulting from it. This mountain is black at the foot and white at the top. A source of silver indeed flows from the summit.
N - Darkness symbolized by heads of black **Crows** **[https://aqua-permanens.blogspot.com/2012/05/le-corbeau.html]** looking out of the sea. The artist must decapitate the Crow by whitening with Fire.
O - A rain of Silver falls from the clouds on the top of the mountain, it is the Ablution or second Solution by which the air element is extracted from the earth and the water (The earth is represented here by the mountain and water by the sea of the philosophers) This stage is sometimes represented by nutrition and bathing, i.e. the purification of **Latona** **[https://aqua-permanens.blogspot.com/2012/07/lombre.html]** (mother of Diana and Apollo, who respectively symbolize the moon and sunlight)
P - Clouds from which silver rain or nutritious dew falls.
Q - The second Coagulation represented by the *Ouroboros* , a serpent that devours its own tail. The Ouroboros is a symbol of the "Self".
THE MINISTER - Sitting on the big bottom sphere, an Ethiopian man and an Ethiopian woman support two higher side spheres on their shoulders. They represent the Nigredo or black work of the second operation in the second putrefaction.
S - The Silver Sea or Pure Sea, that is to say the mercurial liquid by the intervention of which the dyes are united. It is the Mercury of the philosophers
T - The Swan which swims in the sea and whose beak spits out a milky liquid represents the white elixir. It is sometimes called the arsenic of philosophers because it is common to both ferments. Notice that the Swan on its back and with its wings the upper sphere.
V - In the small sphere on the left: The Eclipse of the Sun

X - The Sun which plunges into the sea, that is to say into the mercurial water where the elixir also flows. This operation leads to the Solar Eclipse, to the withdrawal of the projections. **The Rainbow** [https://aqua-permanens.blogspot.com/2013/06/iris-larc-enciel.html] or **Peacock** [https://aqua-permanens.blogspot.com/2013/06/le-paon.html] 's Tail then appears in coagulation.

Y - The Eclipse of the Moon, **The Rainbow** [https://aqua-permanens.blogspot.com/2013/06/iris-larc-enciel.html] or preparation of the White Stone

Z - The Moon at the bottom of the Sea:

b - The White Queen wearing a silver crown strokes a white eagle. This represents or first phase of the Fixing of the Volatile

a - The King dressed in purple wearing a golden crown with the Lion of perfect fixity. The King holds a red lily in his hand while the Queen holds a white one.

c - Above the sphere where the couple King and Queen appear, the Phoenix is enthroned. This one incinerates itself and is reborn from these ashes. He is a symbol of Christ. Note the gold and silver birds flying from the ashes. The Phoenix represents Multiplication and Increase and is a symbol of the "realized Self".

Thanks for reading
Good teacher!

Posted 11th November 2022 by The Alchemist

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